MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date:	September 6, 2006
Purpose:	Fern Valley Interchange Project Citizen Advisory Committee, Project Development Team Meeting
Distribution:	CAC Members, Project Development Team, Public
From:	Sue Casavan, RVCOG
Date Prepared:	September 2006
CAC Attendees:	Bob Korfhage, Terry Helfrich, Joan Haukom, Dack Doggett, Pauly Hinesly, Lee Carrau, Harry Page, Lenny Neimark, Tani Wouters, Mark Gibson, David Lewin, and Madison Taylor
CAC Absent:	David Lowry
Project Team Attendees:	Jerry Marmon, ODOT Environmental Project Manager Debbie Timms, ODOT Project Manager Gary Leaming, ODOT Project information Brian Sheadel, ODOT Senior Designer Christina Fera-Thomas, ODOT Peter Schuytema, ODOT Nancy Reynolds, URS Project Manager Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Sue Casavan, RVCOG
Other Attendees:	48 members of the public signed in (sign-in sheet in file)
PDT Attendees:	Jerry Marmon, Brian Sheadel, Christina Fera-Thomas, Peter Schuytema, ODOT; Jim Wear, Phoenix; Dale Petrasek, Jackson County; Nick Fortey, FHWA; Dan Moore, RVMPO/RVCOG

1. Introductions, Review Agenda, Approve Minutes

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Guarino began the meeting at 6:40 and explained that this was a joint meeting with the CAC (Citizen's Advisory Committee) and the PDT (Project Development Team). She said this was an informational session and that no decisions would be made this evening. The committees started with introductions and reviewed the agenda for tonight's meeting. She asked committee members to review the CAC and PDT minutes for changes or corrections. On page 4, paragraph 3, Tani W. asked Jerry M. if a goal exception was required on the SPUIs. Jerry said that portions of the SPUIs are outside the UGB, but they do not require a goal exception. On page 4, paragraph 4 "better fit" was changed to "similar fit". Minutes were approved with corrections as stated. Vicki G. said at the last meeting there was a question about an overcrossing on South Stage Road. Dan Moore had contacted the City of Medford and updated the committee. He said he talked to the transportation planning manager and he indicated that the overcrossing was in the city transportation system plan designated as a Tier 3 which would be considered a very long-range project. No funding had been identified for that project indicating that if an interchange was needed it would be an ODOT project.

2. Public Comments

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Karen Jones said she was from the Phoenix Hills Meadow Subdivision. She talked how agriculture makes up 10% of the economy and how they must not lose rural access in the development of the urban interchange. She said they had submitted a petition stating that the subdivision felt it was not in their best interest to have a major intersection at the northwest corner of their neighborhood. They would like the intersection to be placed as far north from the neighborhood as possible as the traffic will negatively impact their quality of life, health, and a possible decrease in their property values. She said it would affect traffic circulation in the subdivision and all along Fern Valley Road. She asked if the cheapest fix in the long run would be the best for the Fern Valley Interchange. She wanted the disruption of the construction to be taken into consideration.

Ken Hanks from Phoenix Gas asked that the committees consider cost, emergency vehicle access, and traffic flow when determining the choice. He added that people needed to accept the growth factor and move with it.

Al Walker said he lived above Peterbilt and on the west side off of his road there are blind spots right and left between North Phoenix Road and Fern Valley. He said that people do not obey the speed limit and this was very dangerous and hoped that someone would consider this concern.

Man from audience said there might be disagreement on how the interchange should be done but there was no disagreement about contractors providing the minimal amount of disruption in their homes and businesses. He said anything that will and can be done should be considered.

3. Project Update

Debbie Timms, ODOT

Debbie T. said the designers in engineering were looking at mixing and matching different alternatives and that is what we will go through tonight. She added that they had a meeting with the East Side neighbors and they had asked her if a resident from the East Side neighborhood could sit on the CAC as a member. She would like the CAC to consider this and whether they would sit with voting rights or to sit with comments. She wanted members to think about this and discuss at next meeting.

4. Discuss & Evaluate Alternatives

Nancy Reynolds, URS; Christina Fera-Thomas, Peter Schuytema and Brian Sheadel, ODOT

Nancy R. said a process has been developed where each alternative will be discussed. Brian S. will give a quick description and Peter S. will give specifics on traffic numbers. She explained that the idea was to find key issues of concern and to keep comments focused. She said we are all interested in minimizing impacts to the community and identifying the issues. The committees need to think about how the alternatives could be made better.
Bob K. asked how the committee deviated from the interchange to Highway 99 and the businesses and wanted to know if bike/ped issues will be addressed.
Nancy R. responded that Brian S. would identify what he was able to make work with each of the alternatives and if the committee has suggestions Brian will see if he can accommodate them.
Bob K. asked if there was a basic assumption they could use with all the alternatives and avoid getting sidetracked with some of the same issues.
Brian S. commented that the west side was consistent with all the alternatives.
Bob K. said he has not heard from ODOT what the standards would be for Highway 99, exceptions could be made, but he has not heard any standards.
Brian S. said in previous discussions it would be a sidewalk standard of 7 feet and 14 feet outside width for bike lanes was consistent with all the alternatives.
Bob K. said he would like to see before the next meeting the criteria of whether it is consistent or different for each of the alternatives on Highway 99. How many lanes, how it affects the businesses, whether there are bike lanes on both sides of the highway and what the width of the sidewalks are.
Debbie T. explained that the two original SPUIs had allowed for bike lanes and sidewalks and now, in order to lessen the impact on Highway 99 we could build shared bike lanes and standard sidewalks.
Bob K. wanted to see the standards that ODOT is applying to all the alternatives for bike/ped and said this group had no input on Highway 99.
Debbie T. commented that the committee is not at that point yet and when we get to where we mix and match we will get all the details on each alternative.
Brian S. said that because of the concerns of impacts to businesses and properties adjacent to Highway 99 went from having the full 6 foot bike lane to the shared scenario.
Debbie T. explained that the two original SPUIs the committee recommended allow full bike/ped facilities and are still on the table.

Bob K. asked that at this point in time, is it the same on Highway 99 for all the alternatives with respect to bike/ped facilities.
Jerry M. said yes that is true, in order to get this reduced footprint we have on all the alternatives shared bike facilities on Highway 99.
Bob K. commented that ODOT had made the assumption for analysis purposes that the reduced footprint was the best option at this point in time and that if this group wants to change that and make recommendations we need to do it through this process.
Jerry M. said that is the whole reason for tonight's meeting, to work out those issues.

Peter S. gave an overall view of the alternatives and said there were some issues which applied to all the alternatives that he would show tonight.
He said all of them would last the required 20 years, however none of them will allow for growth beyond 20 years. The interchange themselves whether they be with loops, SPUIs, or diamonds will technically accommodate more than that 20 year period. If there is an ability to handle future growth there must be improvements along Highway 99 beyond what is shown on these alternatives mainly because of the intersection at Highway 99 reaching standards at 2031. If there is a desire to access future growth beyond the 20 years there will have to be consideration of additional improvements along Highway 99. It is not possible to have east side growth without impacting the west side.

Peter S. discussed the SPUIs versus non-SPUIs. He said all the SPUIs as a group are consistent with 30% less delay. The SPUI alternative for the network will work efficiently and handle anything that runs on a schedule such as transit lines, school buses, truck traffic, and emergency vehicle access.
Lenny N. asked Peter to explain the term delay.
Peter S. explained that every time you stop behind a vehicle that is seconds of delay, anything that would interfere with the operation of your vehicle. It is an accurate measurement of congestion and the SPUIs have one big intersection instead of multi-small concept ramp terminals and it saves a lot of time.
Lenny N. asked if he was talking about delay only at the bridge, the intersection itself, or throughout the entire study area.
Peter S. responded that the delay is through the entire study area which includes Highway 99, South Stage through the couplet, downtown Phoenix, Fern Valley Road, and North Phoenix Road, as well as I-5.
David Lewin asked if Peter S. was saying that the delay may start at the interchange but its effect ripples out throughout the whole network. Peter S. responded yes.
Lenny N. asked Peter S. if you are you talking about 20 years out delays, how is it relevant today.
Peter S. responded that we are looking at 2030 so it is in the future in the most congested conditions there is a definite separation of the two groups of alternatives.
Committee members discussed the budget for a SPUI and wondered if it could be a future option.
Peter S. said this is presented to the committee as another consideration, cost is an issue, delay is an issue, traffic is an issue, business impacts, right of way they are all issues to be considered.

Roundtable discussion began of the pros and cons of the alternatives. Points made by committee members

CAC Table 1 SPUI with PBA west side connection

Comments:

Pros: PBA west side

- Less environmental impact – only one bridge across Bear Creek
- Fewer houses on East Bolz would be impacted
- Road construction cost would be less
- Better understanding with west side connection for out-of-towners
- Shared bike lane acceptable according to mandatory criteria
- Full movement for Luman Road (Bear Lake Residents)

Cons: PBA west side

- Lacks bike lanes on 99, need separate lanes on each side (no grates)
- Lack of full-width sidewalks, need to accommodate scooters
- Poor 99 connection – slower and less safe
- Poor performing 99 to Bolz connect for trucks (left) versus improvements to interchange (detracts interchange improvements)
- Out-of-direction travel for I-5 bound traffic from Coleman Creek Estates

CAC Table 1 SPUI with TPAU west side connection

West side Discussion

Pros

- Faster and safer movement from 99 to I-5
- Exit 24 and Luman east / west movement
- Eliminates the 130 degree turn onto Bolz
- Accommodates future growth and cleaner operations if you eliminate the signal, may be necessary in the future
- Like Bolz straight across 99
- Better 99 to I-5 access

Cons

- Difficult access to Bear Lake Estates
- More buildings taken out
- Higher cost and environmental impacts (2 bridges)
- Out-of-direction travel
- Difficult, slow left turn for trucks from 99 to Fern Valley
- Confusing for drivers
- Extra cost of underpass

New Ideas:

- Add connector from eastbound Bolz to westbound Fern Valley
- Keep Bolz connection at 90 degrees

Discussion:

Nick Fortey expressed concern about the spacing at the interchange and asked the committee to think about the connectivity.

Christina Fera-Thomas said the v/cs are acceptable and that queuing is not an issue.

David Lewin asked how many additional years a SPUI would provide relative to diamonds.

Christina F. provided the following information:

- Both 6 lane loops PBA TPAU 2038
- Both 8 lanes 2040
- All 3 SPUIs 2048 with potential of 8 more years

Lenny N. said the numbers for the SPUIs in January were 2036 and wondered how they had changed.

Christina F. explained that they were able to do refinements and maximize the numbers resulting in numbers going up for all of them.

<u>CAC Table 1 SPUI with TPAU west side connection</u>

East side discussion

Pros

- Takes Medford traffic directly to interchange away from Phoenix Hills
- Eastside residents, more bike / ped friendly
- Trucks will find truck stop
- Less congestion
- Eliminates off-ramp movement of 130 degrees
- Like the Bolz connection for 99

Cons

- Difficult to get in and out of Bear Lake due to all the jughandles
- Difficult for series of trucks due to incline
- More environmental impact (2 bridges across Bear Creek)
- Petro is longer distance from I-5
- More truck traffic at new North Phoenix / Fern Valley intersection
- Difficult east-west Phoenix connectivity especially for bike/ped and emergency vehicles
- Difficult to incorporate into future road system
- Underpass will cost more

New Ideas:

- Move Fern Valley / North Phoenix intersection further north
- Create pedestrian connections to shorten I-5 crossing commute
- Straighten out north / south Phoenix roads (possible conflict with grades)

Discussion:

David Lewin said he did not see any saving features for this particular option and suggested deleting it.

Lenny N. said he would like to look at the west side that did not involve this particular SPUI.

Nick F. added that this alternative improved the connectivity and provided better access between I-5 and Highway 99. He said the disadvantages included an additional crossing, much more complicated out-of-direction traffic, and the access does not provide parallel connectivity.
Jim W. said that businesses are located there because they are right next to the freeway and that locals will learn the system but it will be difficult for people not from here.
Lenny N. did not like the extra truck traffic and didn't think this configuration would be good for anyone that lives or does business there.
Madison T. said this has a lot of out-of-direction traffic.
Tani W. said the connectivity is not good from east to west.
Harry P. commented that it would be easier to go to the Albertson's in Medford than try to figure out the way to Ray's.
Jerry M. asked Mark G. in reference to a freight and truck perspective if he would see this out-of-direction travel significant enough to affect the business of Petro.
Mark G. did not think it would make that much of a difference but felt congestion in the intersections would affect amount of increased or decreased usage of Petro. The more congested the intersection becomes the less truckers will use it.
Pauly H. asked about emergency vehicle access to the east side with congestion issues.
Debbie T. said she would hope the general public would move out of the way and ODOT would want to build a roadway good enough to do that.
Peter S. added that the intersections in this alternative would be much less congested in the future and would last longer. He said that this ramp alternative has the lowest v/c of all the ramps on the east side.
Tani W. commented that it was speculation because future growth has not been looked at outside the UGB.
Peter S. said that we have looked at all the growth within the comprehensive plan and this one will operate better than keeping the original Fern Valley alignment.

5. Next Steps

Debbie Timms, ODOT

Debbie T. said the committee will continue with evaluation criteria for the alternatives and she wanted them to think about the possibility of adding a member from the east side neighborhood.

6. Public Comment

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Lorraine Sexton asked why a bike path was needed on Highway 99 and that there was the bicycle greenway from Ashland to Central Point. She said more connections may be needed to the bypass and Highway 99 to get access, but to mix bicycles with highway traffic makes the bicyclist and the driver very nervous; there are numerous accidents and she couldn't say it is all the driver's fault.

Mike McKee commented on truck use of the left hand turn off of Highway 99 going south on Fern Valley. He said it was much easier for semi-trucks to come up to Bolz and swing

wide and that they could make that turn a lot easier and thought it was a pretty good design the way it is now.

Man from audience said he rides the greenway frequently from Ashland to Medford. He said he feels much safer on the greenway than Highway 99 but not all his business is on the greenway. He needs to go to Highway 99 to conduct business and access is limited.

Woman from audience said she had heard a comment about the Rombach building and how it would be safer for them to go around to make a turn than try to cross traffic. She said she lives on Fern Valley and whatever is built, she will be driving it everyday and wanted the people who will be impacted to be considered.

Judy Kimball wanted to comment on west side pedestrian traffic. She said that businesses are positively affected by pedestrian traffic and felt it was difficult to shop in the Phoenix area as a pedestrian.

Chris Haynes of the Siskiyou Cycle Club commented that all of the alternatives except for the last couple he had looked at back in January do not include bike lanes on Highway 99. He said he found it unacceptable and that it would hurt downtown Phoenix and hurt the businesses because it would dramatically divert the bike/ped community. He supported routes away from Highway 99 in addition to and not in substitution of bike/ped facilities on Highway 99 and felt the highway was an important transportation corridor and should accommodate all transportation modes. He asked the committee to choose alternatives that provide adequate bike/ped facilities.

7. Comfort Check

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Madison T. - inaudible
Harry P. - inaudible
Lenny N. - I just want to point out one thing about the east side of Phoenix Hills. There are 4 people on this committee who live in the Phoenix Hills subdivision and that is pretty major representation. I would love to see us discuss the potential “a la carte” possibilities and I think ultimately that we will look at the 3 distinct areas of this project and pick the best match, it looks complicated now but we can simplify it. We still need to have an honest discussion about SPUIs and money.
Tani W. - I think we are not going to be done in October. I think we need to remember that there are other cities where bike/ped people could work together as a community and we do not need a huge amount of space to accommodate everybody. I think we all need to remember that when we talk about walking and biking to businesses that the businesses are the economic backbone of the community and out from those businesses stems everything else in the development.
Dack D. - A lot questions came from the public and I have a question for Bob, is it possible to add lanes or widen the greenway to expedite traffic of bikes through, or is it just the connectivity to city facilities that is the issue. I heard public comments and I know that is

what the greenway is for and I know there are other activities happening there but I wonder if that is an option.
Bob K. - The whole issue of movement of bicycles and pedestrians is part of what we should be looking at in terms of overall transportation systems. One of our primary objectives when we started was to improve the transportation system at this interchange and part of that was to include bicycles and pedestrians. The important thing for me is to look at potential options to address these issues just as we would look at residential communities or businesses. Our NEPA goal is to look at these issues.
Joan H. - Would like more time to carry on this discussion and would like to see the facilitators take a little more control.
Terry H. - I'll pass, new things to think about.
Bob K. - I agree with Joan.
David Lewin - I second much of what has been said, I get the sense we have just started to build momentum and the evening ends. Perhaps we could have a longer block of time, two nights in a row, meet every two weeks.
Pauly H. – I feel like we are just getting started. I think I need more information I was a little confused, would like to go through one at a time, feel like we should meet more often and keep going.
Lee C. – Need to get a narrower focus and move forward a little faster. It is dragging. We have made progress, but feel we should move faster.
Mark G. - I simply agree with that, making progress and move forward.
Debbie T. - I am comfortable, willing to set up meetings for you for whatever schedule you decide.
Dale P. – I am for moving along a little faster also, make sure everyone knows the numbers we are looking at are based on the existing UGB. We need to look at extra capacity on any of the alternatives we pick, the area will expand quickly.
Jim W. – I agree with what everyone has said, one thing that will help us is to get a copy of what was said so we can take off from there at our next meeting.
Nick F. – Important to get public input, focus on the process and means by which the decisions get made, everyone needs to be in line with the decision process. Looking at a lot of issues and it is a long involved process.
Jerry M. – We could spend 2 or 3 meetings just on bike/ped let alone major alternatives, I understand that concern and I want to move on also and sometimes it is slow.
Peter S. – I don't have any more comments. I'm fine.
Christina F. – I am fine too, thank you.

8. Agenda Build for Next CAC Meeting

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Agenda item not discussed due to time constraints.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 4, 2006 from 6:30-9:30 p.m.
Phoenix High School Commons
Phoenix, Oregon